

College and Career Readiness: 2014-15 School-Day SAT and ACT Testing

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At-a-Glance

The 2014-15 school year was the second year that Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) funded school-day testing on the SAT for all 11th grade students. In addition, it was the first year that the ACT was funded in the district for all seniors. One of the goals of this initiative was to increase college enrollment among students scheduled to graduate from high school in 2016. This goal was based on a belief that exposure to college admissions exams would increase the number of students who consider attending college.

The decision to fund SAT and/or ACT testing follows policies enacted in states across the country. In 2013, it was reported that twelve states required and paid for all 11th grade students in public high schools to take the SAT or ACT (Lewin, 2013). The latest figures provided by College Board¹ indicated that over 170,000 students participated in a school-day SAT program since 2009, and the program spanned 70 school districts and 16 states in 2013-14.

The college admissions process includes completing applications for admission and financial aid. In addition, college entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT are required for admission to most four-year and many two-year institutions. Policies that require and fund SAT or ACT testing remove the possibility that lack of entrance exam scores will be an obstacle to college enrollment.

Dallas ISD high school counselors and the district's College Access Program strive to address obstacles to college enrollment. They encourage seniors to complete admissions and financial aid applications. With school-day SAT and ACT testing, the district addresses another barrier to college enrollment by subsidizing college entrance exam fees and administering the exam on a school day, thus eliminating both the financial burden and the challenge of obtaining transportation to a testing site on a weekend, when the test is typically administered.

Methodology

SAT. Dallas ISD administered the SAT to 11th grade students on April 29, 2015. The test includes verbal, mathematics, and writing sections, and it is accepted as an admissions test by many institutions of higher learning. Scale scores in each of the three sections

range from 200 to 800. Verbal and mathematics scores are combined into a composite score ranging from 400 to 1600.

The district's Evaluation and Assessment Department downloaded SAT data from College Board on July 20, 2015. Evaluators then merged test scores with student demographic data from district data files, calculated composite verbal and mathematics scores, and determined whether or not test takers met or exceeded the Destination 2020 college readiness benchmark (a combined verbal and mathematics score of 990). The evaluator then calculated average verbal, mathematics, and composite scale scores and the number and percentage of students who met or exceeded the Destination 2020 benchmark. Data also were grouped by school, ethnicity, sex, and socioeconomic status. As appropriate, comparisons were conducted to the previous year's numbers.

ACT. Dallas ISD administered the school-day ACT on September 30, 2014 to district seniors. The test includes sections in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science, and a composite score comprised of the average of the scores for these four sections. Composite ACT scores can range from 1 to 36.

The district's Evaluation and Assessment Department used score data provided by ACT, Inc. in late 2014. The evaluator merged these scores with district demographic data and determined whether or not test takers met or exceeded the Destination 2020 (a composite score meeting or exceeding 21), Texas Success Initiative (TSI; meeting or exceeding 23) and Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR; meeting or exceeding 24) benchmarks.² The evaluator then calculated average composite scores and percentages of students who met or exceeded these benchmarks by school.

SAT Results

More than 7,650 Dallas ISD 11th grade students (89.9% of those enrolled) participated in school-day SAT testing in 2014-15. As shown in Table 1, districtwide, 14.5 percent of tested students achieved a score of 990 or higher, but this percentage improved slightly from the 13.3 percent meeting or exceeding this benchmark in 2013-14. The highest percentage of 11th grade students meeting or exceeding this benchmark occurred in

¹ As retrieved from: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/highered/recruitment/sat-test/school-day> on September 8, 2015.

² A score that meets or exceeds the TSI benchmark of 23 is sufficient to exempt a student from developmental courses in college.

magnet and early college high schools. Among comprehensive high schools, students at Hillcrest (16.5%), W.T. White (21.2%) and Woodrow Wilson (28.7%) high schools had the highest rates of success meeting or exceeding the benchmark. A total of 15 (40.5%) schools exceeded the district percentage of students meeting the benchmark, and 26 (70.3%) schools had higher percentages of students meeting the benchmark in 2014-15 than in 2013-14.

Table 1: 2013-14 and 2014-15 Dallas ISD 11th Grade Students Meeting District SAT Benchmark by Campus (School-Day Only)

Campus	2013-14			2014-15		
	Tested	Met Benchmark	%	Tested	Met Benchmark	%
SEM	82	81	98.8	87	87	100.0
TAG	64	62	96.9	54	51	94.4
Rangel	58	42	72.4	62	54	87.1
Booker T. Washington	218	133	61.0	198	137	69.2
Obama	13	5	38.5	11	7	63.6
Lassiter	54	20	37.0	58	26	44.8
Public Service Magnet	105	38	36.5	102	44	43.1
Health Magnet	127	49	38.6	134	51	38.1
Garza	103	32	31.1	105	39	37.1
Educ. Magnet	72	23	31.9	72	23	31.9
Business Magnet	110	39	35.5	114	34	29.8
Wilson	354	102	28.8	345	99	28.7
W.T. White	472	92	19.5	415	88	21.2
Hillcrest	261	49	18.8	219	36	16.4
Smith New Tech	97	7	7.2	97	15	15.5
District	7,663	1,017	13.3	7,650	1,111	14.5
Gilliam	72	9	12.5	85	10	11.8
Skyline	959	88	9.2	1,052	113	10.7
Molina	461	23	5.0	399	27	6.8
Kimball	283	15	5.3	264	17	6.4
Roosevelt	101	1	1.0	96	6	6.3
Sunset	442	14	3.2	399	25	6.3
Seagoville	265	15	5.7	266	15	5.6
Adamson	278	13	4.7	311	17	5.5
B. Adams	361	13	3.6	355	19	5.4
N. Dallas	243	9	3.7	253	13	5.1
Jefferson	252	12	4.8	309	15	4.9
Patton	55	0	0.0	52	2	3.8
Wilmer-Hutchins	196	4	2.0	163	6	3.7
Samuell	290	7	2.4	339	11	3.2
Conrad	204	5	2.5	207	6	2.9
Lincoln	111	1	0.9	111	3	2.7
Carter	144	3	2.1	189	4	2.1
Pinkston	187	3	1.6	175	3	1.7
Spruce	233	6	2.6	254	4	1.6
S. Oak Cliff	225	1	0.4	212	3	1.4
Madison	111	1	0.9	84	1	1.2
Angelou*	-	-	-	2	0	0.0

Note: Students met benchmark if composite verbal and mathematics score met or exceeded 990; 2014-15 percentages in blue indicate an increase from 2013-14. *The school-day SAT was not administered on the Maya Angelou campus in 2013-14.

As displayed in Table 2, district 11th grade students had average verbal scores of 392, average mathematics scores of 408, and an average composite score of 799. Among individual campuses, magnet and early college high schools had higher average scale scores. At the comprehensive high schools, Wilson (886), White (854), and Hillcrest (830) achieved the highest average SAT scores. A total of 16 (43.2%) schools exceeded the district's average composite score of 799. The overall district and 25 (67.6%) schools improved their composite SAT scores in 2014-15 when compared to 2013-14.

Table 2: 2013-14 and 2014-15 Average Dallas ISD 11th Grade School-Day SAT Scores by Subject and Campus

Campus	2013-14				2014-15			
	N	V	M	C	N	V	M	C
SEM	82	588	679	1267	87	636	697	1,333
TAG	64	637	676	1314	54	636	657	1,294
Rangel	58	532	551	1083	62	544	533	1,077
Arts Mag	218	532	511	1043	198	548	516	1,064
Obama	13	447	546	993	11	496	505	1,001
Health Magnet	127	469	499	968	134	484	487	971
Pub. Service Mag	105	460	493	953	102	483	484	967
Lassiter	54	446	507	953	58	462	501	963
Garza	103	447	493	940	105	465	483	948
Educ. Mag	72	445	492	937	72	458	475	933
Business Mag	110	446	496	942	114	459	466	925
Wilson	354	420	454	875	345	436	450	886
Gilliam	72	414	451	865	85	418	449	866
W.T. White	472	395	431	826	415	415	439	854
Smith New Tech	97	381	415	796	97	422	431	853
Hillcrest	261	405	435	840	219	411	419	830
District	7663	375	413	787	7,650	392	408	799
Skyline	959	380	412	793	1,052	390	399	789
Molina	461	345	400	745	399	378	403	781
Sunset	442	346	391	737	399	377	397	774
Kimball	283	352	381	733	264	370	387	758
Adamson	278	364	398	762	311	367	387	753
B. Adams	361	350	385	736	355	370	381	751
Seagoville	265	347	384	732	266	361	375	737
Roosevelt	101	315	348	663	96	351	385	736
N. Dallas	243	341	387	728	253	359	375	733
Jefferson	252	333	399	732	309	349	375	725
Wilmer-Hutchins	196	324	365	689	163	350	376	725
Lincoln	111	321	379	700	111	346	373	719
Conrad	204	317	361	677	207	343	373	717
Spruce	233	325	370	695	254	344	370	714
Samuell	290	325	360	685	339	349	355	704
Angelou*	-	-	-	-	2	350	350	700
S. Oak Cliff	225	316	357	672	212	335	364	699
Pinkston	187	317	353	672	175	336	360	696
Carter	144	337	370	707	189	348	347	695
Madison	111	335	361	696	84	318	350	668
Patton	55	319	354	672	52	304	330	634

Note: 2014-15 average composite scores in blue indicate an increase from 2013-14; *The school-day SAT exam was not administered on the Maya Angelou campus in 2013-14; N = number of students; M = mathematics score; C = composite score.

In each demographic category, white (57.5%), male (15.1%), and not economically disadvantaged (33.2%) students had the highest rates of meeting the SAT benchmark in 2014-15 (see Table 3), but readers should use caution when interpreting rate differences because of widely varying numbers of students in each category. With the exception of white students, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the benchmark increased in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14 for each student demographic group.

Table 3. 2014-15 Dallas ISD 11th Grade Students Meeting District SAT Benchmarks, by Student Group (School-Day Only)

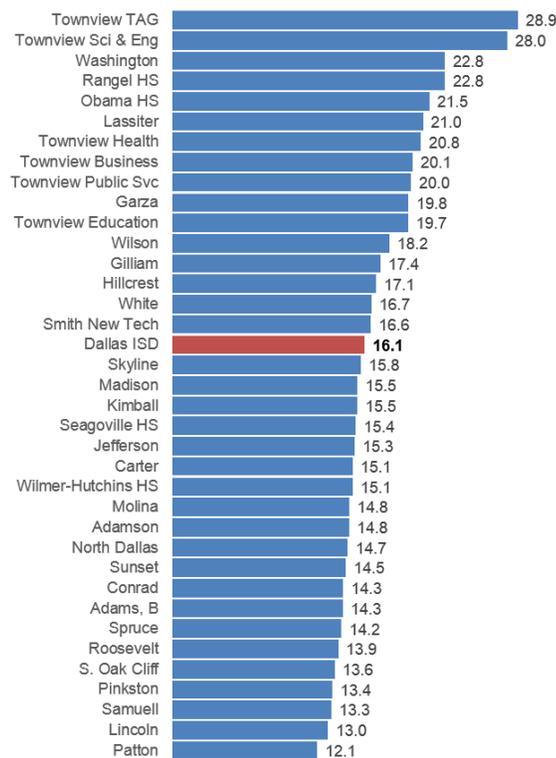
Student Group	2013-14			2014-15		
	Tested N	Met N	%	Tested N	Met N	%
Ethnicity						
Asian	134	41	30.6	151	53	35.1
African-American	1,836	175	9.5	1,762	182	10.3
Hispanic	5,119	509	9.9	5,261	626	11.9
American Indian	41	6	14.6	41	8	19.5
Pacific Islander	18	4	22.2	8	3	37.5
Multiracial	27	7	25.9	37	14	37.8
White	465	273	58.7	390	225	57.7
Gender						
Female	4,033	508	12.6	4,044	565	14.0
Male	3,608	507	14.1	3,606	546	15.1
Socioeconomic Status						
Econ. Disadvantaged	5,611	510	9.1	6,442	710	11.0
Not Econ. Disadvantaged	2,052	507	24.7	1,208	401	33.2

Note: Students met benchmark if composite verbal and mathematics score met or exceeded 990; 2014-15 percentages in blue indicate an increase from 2013-14.

ACT Results

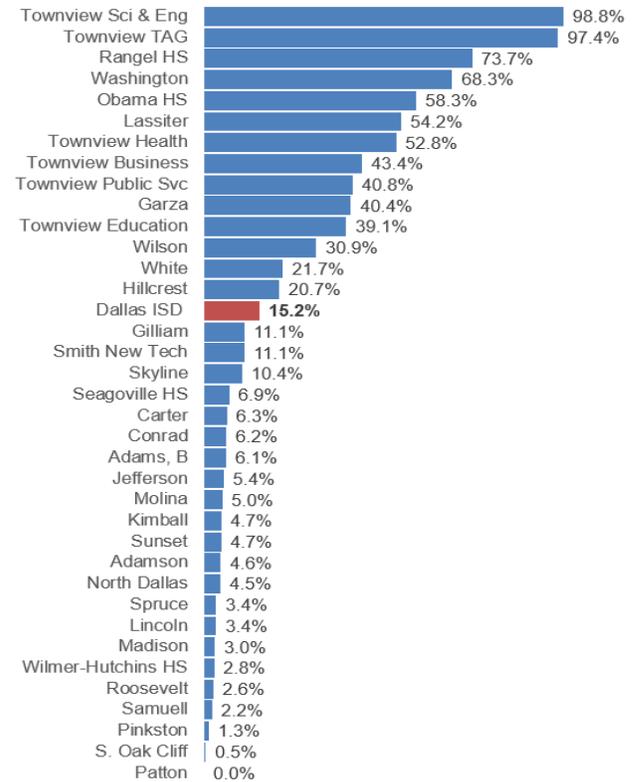
Nearly 85 percent of enrolled seniors took the school-day ACT in September 2014. As shown in Figure 1, 16 (43.2%) schools exceeded the district average score of 16.1. Districtwide, 15.2 percent of seniors who took the school-day ACT met or exceeded the Destination 2020 benchmark of 21. A total of 14 (37.8%) schools had higher percentages of students meeting the benchmark than did the district overall, as displayed in Figure 2. Fewer seniors met the TSI and TAPR benchmarks. Across the district, 9.2 percent met the TSI benchmark, and 6.9 percent met the TAPR benchmark.

Figure 1. 2014-15 Average Composite ACT Scores for Dallas ISD Seniors, by Campus (School-Day Only)



Note: ACT composite scores range from 1 to 36.

Figure 2. 2014-15 Dallas ISD Seniors Meeting or Exceeding Destination 2020 Benchmark (21) for the ACT, by Campus (School-Day Only)



Note: Students exceeded the Destination 2020 benchmark if ACT composite score met or exceeded 21.

References

Klasik, D (2013). The ACT of Enrollment: The College Enrollment Effects of State-Required College Entrance Exam Testing. *Educational Researcher* 42, 151-160.

Lewin, T (2013). Testing, Testing: More Students Are Taking Both the ACT and SAT. *The New York Times*, August 2, 2013

Full 2014-15 final evaluation reports for College and Career Readiness: SAT and ACT School-Day Testing can be found at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888>. For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.